

Mr. E. WOOD

I am quite sure that I shall be voicing the sentiments of all who have spoken or will speak from these benches if I hope that no word of ours will further complicate the extremely difficult position of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on this question of Egypt. Anybody who knows Egypt must recognise that the position at this moment is as serious as it can be. I should like, with the indulgence of the House, to ask attention to one or two of the considerations which I think must govern our dealings in Egypt to-day, as they always govern the question of the white nation when brought into contact with a nation of any other colour. I only do so because I think from what we have heard this evening that these considerations are in some danger in certain quarters of being lost sight of. Earlier in the course of this Debate we have heard that the same arguments that were used for the purpose of advocating severe measures, if they be so called, in Egypt, on the score of the Prime Minister being murdered there, would be equally applicable to the United States on an occasion like the murder of President McKinley, or to Russia on the occasion of the murder of the Russian Czar. I venture to think that between those two cases there is no connection whatever, and

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for this reason, that the whole civilised world would regard the murder of the President of the United States or the murder of the Czar of Russia as an isolated act, while the gravity of the murder of the Prime Minister of Egypt is that the murder is merely one symptom of a general unrest in that country. Therein lies its gravity. One often hears that when a white nation is dealing with a black nation it is practically governing by force. I think that even in those conditions government remains what it always is—government by consent. Anybody who has lived or who has passed his time among those conditions among black people must recognise that government in that case also is government by consent, because unless you can keep the consent—by which I mean that the black people are prepared to be governed for their own good by the white people—your government is not worth a day's purchase.

If that is true, as I think it is, surely the argument that under all conditions and at all times all men are equal is one of the most flimsy and one of the most academic that could possibly be brought forward. It is no more true to say that all men are equal at all times than to say that all men have red hair or false teeth. And while we on our side most emphatically disclaim any attempt permanently to hold down black races, we do at the same time insist that if our position in those countries is to be maintained it can only be, as it is at the present moment, by maintaining the position and fulfilling the functions of a superior race. I think that one of the hon. Members who spoke earlier in this Debate said or inferred that all foreign nations, or, rather, the subordinate nations, would learn their vituperation and would learn what way to treat their Government by considering what way we treat our Government in this country, and I think he went so far as to say that all the arts of vituperation could be learned from either the Tory Press or the Tory Opposition. I think that after this evening's Debate those pupils will gradually realise

that they can learn the lesson of vituperation from some hon. Members opposite even better than they can from the Tory Press or those who sit with me upon these benches. If I may, without any disrespect to those who, perhaps, on this point differ from me, I would ask them to consider why it is that white men who

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leave this country to settle in lands where the black population is predominant at once become imbued with the fact that they must at all costs uphold the prestige of the white governing race? It is because their fates, the fortunes of their wives and children, are at the mercy of the black population, which can only be maintained in its proper place by strong insistence on order. It is the duty of all Governments, so long as they are in the right, as a first step to maintain order. I have observed the great suspicion with which some hon. Members regard the use of the word "prestige." I am, I confess, set to wondering whether they and I mean the same thing when we use the word "prestige." I think in the minds of some hon. Members there is the idea, when that word is used, that it means right or wrong—the white man will; be upheld and supported and that the black man will be downtrodden, and will have extremely scanty opportunities of justice. That is not my meaning when I use the word "prestige." My meaning is that the subordinate race should by all I means be fairly treated, and that there: should be no sense of injustice. But given that condition, surely you are in a position to insist that the black races must and can only be treated as subordinate to the race charged with the government of their country for the time being. The time may come, and I hope it will come, when those races with whose government we are now charged may be in a position to assume the control of their own fortunes, and may be able to work out their own destiny. When that time is reached, I am sure that all parties in this country will be prepared to assist them when they make the attempt. To encourage them to make that attempt, however, when they are in the condition of political children is not only to court disaster to those engaged in the government of the country, but it is to court disaster in one of the most valued possessions of this country, and bring into most serious jeopardy the white, races wherever they are in contact with the black races. It is for these reasons that we on this side feel compelled to invite the attention of the foreign Secretary to these matters. We have no wish to complicate the position, or say one word to add to the difficulties, but we do hope that before the end of the evening the Secretary for Foreign Affairs will be able to give us some assurance on this question, in regard to which we feel the greatest anxiety.